

ON TRACK WITH MDT

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Partnering to provide more effective services is an essential component of MDT's mission, and the new joint port-of-entry weigh station and inspection site on the Montana/Wyoming border is evidence of that.

Wyoming and Montana began partnering several years ago to build a joint port-of-entry weigh station facility. The site, scheduled for completion in late 2005, will replace the existing Sheridan, Wyoming and Crow Agency, Montana weigh stations. Thus, commercial carriers traveling between Casper and Billings will have only one weigh station to visit, and PrePass member carriers may not need to stop at all.

Located at the Dietz Interchange on Interstate 90 just south of the Montana/Wyoming border, the new facility will include a commercial vehicle inspection building, office space for the Wyoming Highway Patrol, and combined Montana and Wyoming port services. The inspection building will be similar to one Montana opened two years ago between Laurel and Billings.

Selection of the Dietz site was accomplished using federal "trade corridor" funding secured jointly by the states. Carter Burgess, a national consulting firm, managed the site selection process and ultimately recommended the Dietz site to transportation officials representing the two states. Although all of the details have not yet been worked out, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) construction money will fund the majority of the project, with state matches contributed equally by Wyoming and Montana. After the facility is complete, Montana will pay a percentage of annual indirect costs such as building maintenance, utilities and garbage collection fees.

Commercial vehicle enforcement will also be accomplished on a shared cost basis. The new weigh station will be staffed with Wyoming commercial vehicle officers authorized to enforce both Montana and Wyoming commercial vehicle law. In return for enforcement services provided by Wyoming, Montana expects to pay up to one half of the salary of each Wyoming officer assigned to the new facility, as well as related costs.

Enforcement efforts at the new facility will be accomplished with the aid of multi-directional weigh-in-motion (WIM) and HELP/PrePass automated vehicle identification (AVI) equipment. WIM and AVI allow a fully compliant PrePass carrier to bypass the scale from either direction unless the carrier receives a random call-in. Wyoming and Montana have been HELP/PrePass member states for some time, and both states are pleased to officially announce a new PrePass service location on the busy I-90 corridor.

In addition to the new facility, Montana already maintains joint port weigh station relationships with Idaho and Alberta, Canada. We are leading the way in joint port development and related cost sharing, and I take pride in helping both our neighboring states/provinces and our commercial carriers stay "on track with MDT."

Dave Galt
Director